

[Joe McFarland]

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Folks stuff - Rangelore

Phipps, Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. #7 [96?]

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Joe McFarland, 74, negro was born on the Cobb Plantation, near Bonham, Tex. His father was sent to the Rusk Penitentiary in 1868 for murder, and his mother moved the family to Gainsville, Tex., where she washed clothes for a living. Joe was able to borrow horses while just a small child and since he was so interested in becoming a rider, various cow boys instructed him until he became proficient in the art. When 12 years old, he was employed as a regular cowboy by W.E. Washington, who owned and operated a ranch in the Territory. Joe was employed on one trail drive before he was employed by McClish, who owned and operated a ranch near the Sugarloaf Mts., in the Terr. After McClish sold out, [?] went to Fort Worth, Texas, and entered the carpenter trade. When his age forced him to retire, he moved to his present residence at 1101 E. 11th St. His story:

"Now, the cattle business has changed a whole lot since I was in it but I can give you a pretty cleah pichur 'bout de time when I was what dey call, 'Ridin' de Range'. De first thing am whar I was bo'n. I was bo'n on de old Cobb Plantation, just outside of [Bonham?],

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Texas. My pappy an' mammy was owned by Marster Cobb, an' I was bo'n a slave in de yeah of '63.

"Now, I don't recall any 'bout de old Plantation 'cause mammy an' me moves 'way f'om dere aftah my pappy shot a man an' got sent to de pen at Rusk Texas, fo' five yeahs. Mammy took us to Gainsville, Texas, where she made our livin' at washin' clothes fo' de white fo'ks in town. I was de delivery boy. I picks up de clothes, den delivers dem aftah deys washed.

"While runnin' around over town, I seen lotsa cow punchers ridin' around, I always wanted to ride a hoss an' I'd ast 'em to give me a ride. Dey always thought it was funny fo' me to ast 'em, an' lots of 'em did give me rides on deys hosses, an' some of 'em teached me how to ride by myself. C.12 - 2/11/[41?] [???] 2 Now, you talk about de cock of de walk! Dat's just what I thought I was, 'cordin to what my mammy says 'bout it. She says dat I was swelled up lak a pigeon fo' sev'al days a tah bumming' a ride, or gittin' to ride one by my lonesome.

"By de time I was 12 yeahs old, I was a good rider an' had rode sev'al buckin' broncs. 'Long 'bout dis time, Bill Washington come to Gainsville, a-lookin' fo' hands to run his place which was 'bout 3 miles North of whar Marietta, Oklahoma, am now. 'Twarnt do many riders in town, an' somebody tole him dat I could ride so he looked me up. Upshot of it was, that he hired me fo' 15 a month an' chuck. Dat \$15.00 a month am de first money I ever made, an' 'twas de biggest 'cause I didn't know how to spend it, an'it went further.

"Anyway, I went to de place wid three tudder riders he hired in Gainsville while he went to Whichita to look fo' some mo' riders. De culled fellows he hired was, Marshall Hurd an' Frank Denmark. Dey was two real riders, ropers, an' crack pistol shots. I don't know whar dey larned to shoot so well, but you can well b'lieve dey could. Seem lak 'twas occidental when dey hit something' 'cause dey don't take no slow aim, but dey never missed. Dat's what counts. De misses.

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"When we gits to de place, dere am 16-18 riders dere, dat rides reg'lar fo' Bill. His real name am, W.E. Washington, but ever'body calls him Bill. He run over 12,000 head wid de 'Cross O' brand. Make de cross befo' de O, to make de brand. De place am in what was called, 'Pickens county', but aint no Pickens county there now. 'Twarnt no Marietta either. 'Twas just cowcritters, grass, hills, mesquite, an' mo' cow-critters. Pickens 3 county was in de Indian Territory, but 'twarnt in Oklahoma 'cause dey changed it all up. Tudder thing 'bout de Territory am, dat a white man can't own anything in his own name. An Indian have to own it, so Bill marries him an Indian squaw to git him de right up there.

"'Twas some shore good riders an' ropers dat wo'ked fo' Bill. Tom Hill, never seen him th'owed, 'n' Jim Hankins, Jeff Stewart, Ike Johnson, Knewt Steel, all good riders an' ropers an' all quick on de draw wid de pistol. Never saw one of dem draw his six shooter an' fire dat he misses. All Good. Cose now, some am better dan tudders 'cause dey shoots longer distances.

"Take Bill Washington, Dick McClish, an' Arthur James, whym dey stands off an' practices shootin' by de hour. Arthur could take a broom straw an' shoot it at 30 paces when lotsa people couldn't even see it dat far. De trick he pulls on dat straw shootin' em to turn ground, an' shoot w'en he faces it. Do it real fast, an' see lak he don't even take aim. I make de guess dat Arthur James was de best shot in dat country. He wo'ked fo' three yeahs while I was on de place, den left to ram rod fo' Andy Addigton, dat had a place around Sugarloaf mountains, in de Territory. I was told dat 'twas 'bout 12,000 head in de herd but I don't recall de brand. De sugarloaf name come f'om de mountains am so smooth an' round, dat dey looks lak so much sugar piled up an' smoothed off.

"Bill Washington an' Zack Addington had a ranch in [?] West part of de Territory, an' Bill 'cides to take some rannies out there to bring some beef back. He picks 30-40 of them, an' lights out. I finds out w'en we all gits there, dat 'twas a 4 big ranch wid 40-50,000 head on it wid de 'ZAB' brand fo' Zack Addington an' Bill. 'Stead of bringin' back some ZAB beef,

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dey buys 2,000 head f'om Capt Ichor, who run de Three I Ranch. He brand am made wid three I's lak dis, III.

"Seem lak de ram rods aint in no big hurry to git back, so we all had some contests aftah Jim Casebolt, a nigger cow poke on de III got one of de Cross O boys to ride a hoss he thought was gentled, an' turned out to be reg'lar dynamite. Dat hoss pitched lak de devil himself but never th'owed de Cross O hand. Jim was one of de best cow hands in the West. He could ride, rope, an' shoot. He lived on Mud Crick, A crick dat run through de III.

"I don't 'zactly recall all dat happened in de contest, but Cap Ichor had plenty snaky hosses, an' some wild ones dat had never had anything but a rope on it. Ever'body had all de ridin' he wanted, an' den some. Most neah ever'body rode a wild one while we all was there.

"When it come time to start do drive back to de Cross O, we all got the herd started, den settled down to de reg'lar job of trail drivin'. You know, as long's your in 15-20 miles of d place whar de critters am raised, 'twas hard job to keep 'em goin' away. W'en you gits over dat, 'twas easy job of herding'. Well, not too easy but easier. Secound night out f'om de III, it comes up a lightning, thunder, an' rain storm. I seen de lightning bouncing around off the long horn's horns. We was all mighty skittish around there, but we had to keep riding around de critters, en' singing' to keep 'em lulled down. Dey was [oneasy?], though, an' mighty restless.

"Well, it fin'ly happened 'long about 11 o:Clock. De 5 critters went on stampede. Only one thing to do in a stomp. Dat's to git it stopped as soon as you can 'cause ' twas danger of killin' a lotts beef an' losin' de boss some money. We all rid an' rid. It seemed lak we rid 100 miles befo' de critters got run down an' started bawlin'. W'en dey started dat, I knew 'twas all over but I didn't know whar anybody else was.

"There I was, wid around 1,000 critters, wet hongry, an' didn't know whar anything was but North. I didn't do anything but stay wid de herd 'til some tudder hands showed. Dey

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showed about two hours aftah sun-up, an' come a-bringin' about 700 more critters wid dem. Reason dey come to'ards de herd, dey said, was 'cause dey could read de sign an' see which way de herd had gone, an' knowin' dat de rest of de gang would show wide de herd, dey just come on. Pretty soon, de whole gang showed. Dey trailed de herd, an' Jim Casebolt was wid dem. He said dat we was on Turkey Crick, Dat's in de Territory known as Dead man's land, on account of de fork in de Red River an' de courts couldn't 'cide on wheter Oklahoma or Texas owned it.

"Aftah 'bout a two weeks roundup, de rest of de herd was gathered up an' put back on Mud Crick. Den, we started back to de Cross O. On de way, we all caught sev'al Antelope. Don't let nobody tell you dat a hoss can ketch one 'cause he can't. You see, an antelope is faster dan a hoss, but he's crazy to run in a circle, an' dey wont cross a creek, 'cides lak in' to stay in de high places. W'en dey starts de circle business, you put men in relays. One chase awhile, den another chase as de critter passes by. Dat way, de critters gits run dow, an' you can rope him. Dey sho makes good eatin, too. We was three weeks on dat 6 aftah we got good away f'om de Ill.

"Durin' de time I was wo'kin' fo' Bill, McClish had 'cided to sell out his interest in de Cross O. Aftah he sold out, he went to de Arbuckle mountains, whar he established a ranch of his own wid 14,000 head of 'OXO' cattle. De 'OXO' was his brand. De place whar he made his headquarters was called de, 'Bywater' Store', on account of de store these dat a follow name Bywater, run.

"In September of '93, I quit de Cross O an' j'ined de 'OXO' While up there, a fellow name of Driggers was de ram rod, an' a fellow name of Steve Dickson was de best all around hand I ever saw. I was de only cullud fellow on de place an' was there 'cause McClish knew I could hold my place as a nigger an' warnt so uppity as some of de niggers.

"Dis Dickson fellow had sev'al trained hosses dat could cut critters outer a herd lak nobody's business. Dey seemed to 'joy de cuttin' out, an' once de critter was made known

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to dam, dat is, once dey saw de loop sankin' out aftah a certain critter, dey stayed on it's tail 'til de rope had de critter good, den day'd set down 'til de critter reached de end of de lasso, den fell.

"I didn't stay on de OXO very long. Just f'om '83 'til '85. While I was there, I met some United States Marshalls. 'Twas so many whiskey peedlers an' so on in dat part of de Territory, dat de marshalls kept busy. De biggest Marshall was Mashawn. He traveled wid 10-12 men, an' had covered wagons to tote de beddin an' victuals.

"One of de Deputy Marshalls was a tough nigger name of 7 Brazos Reed. He was an ex-slave nigger dat larned to shoot aftah freedom so well, dat de States took him on as a deputy. I was into de Bywater Store one day w'en a fellow went ridin' off in a hurry befo' I knowed dat Brazos was anywhar around. Brazos hollered 'Halt!' De man kept riding so Brazos knelt, took aim, an' shot him in de back. [?] can't figger out de 'zact distance but 'twas might good shootin'. I think dat Brazos was under Ledbetter, another Marshall.

"Aftah I put in my time on de OXO, I took out an' come heah to Fort Worth, whar I could make a lot mo' money wid half de trouble.

"To spend de time, I sometimes set around, thinkin' 'bout de days w'en de cow pokes played such dirty tricks on each tudder. One of de special tricks dat would come up ever' once in awhile was w'en one of de boys brought in a wild hoss dat had never been rid. Usu'lly Spanish hosses wid long manes an' tails. De boys'd tell someone else dat de hoss was done broke in. Tudder ranny'd mount, den have a hard time keeping his seat. 'Twarnt always dat de victim didn't know though. Sometimes, a fellow would know but [he'd?] play lak he was igomus, but would go ahead an' gives de boys a ex'ibition.

"Tudder thing I recalls dat used to trouble me some was when de Comanches used to take toll. Dey'd come to de ram rod an' ask fo'r beef ever' nine days or so. Bill'd tell a rider to pick out a scrub. Dat way, he'd keep the Comanches f'om stompeding' de whole herd,

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an' git rid of de scrubs too. Zack used to say, 'Better give 'em one dan have 'em stompede do whole bunch'.